

July _____, 2005

Name
Council
Site Address

Dear Name:

I would like to extend an invitation to you to join me in attending the 2006 Annual Sanctuary Advisory Council National Meeting. This year's meeting will be held the week of April 24, 2006 in Washington, D. C. hosted by the National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP), Headquarters Office.

This is the sixth year the NMSP has held this major national meeting. These meetings are a time to bring together our collective wisdom on advisory councils, share lessons learned, and discuss national level issues. It is an opportunity for the program to introduce you to significant activities we are involved in around the country. Most importantly, it is a time to thank you, our dedicated and passionate volunteers, who work so diligently with us to protect our sanctuary resources.

Attached are several documents to prepare you for the meeting. Where action is required, the language is in **bolded blue**. When providing your comments or any other information, please provide it to your manager and/or council coordinator who will immediately forward it to Karen Brubeck, our National Advisory Council Coordinator.

Meeting Format Changes

As with all program activities, we strive to fine-tune the meeting on an annual basis in response to thoughts and ideas from staff and yourselves; this year is no exception. As discussed in my previous letter to you, upon listening to the debates and discussions about the meeting over the past several years, the NMSP is responding by making several significant changes to the 2006 meeting:

1. **Eliminate the advice session with the Council of Chairs.** It is extraordinarily difficult to plan far enough ahead to adequately accommodate each council's meeting schedule. It is equally hard to create a process that adequately addresses the issue of the Chairs being able to represent the views of their councils in the real-time discussion format that occurs at the advice session. Most importantly, I recognize that many of you and your councils are not comfortable with the process of taking off your "site hat" and putting on a "national hat" since most of you feel that your expertise lies in your local

community, sanctuary, resources and issues. In response to these numerous and on-going concerns, the NMSP will eliminate the Council of Chairs and the advice session for 2006 and in future years.

2. **Replace case studies with a panel discussion.** For the last several years, we have asked each Council to present a case study at the meeting. Your feedback to us has indicated that although you find the case studies valuable, you would also like to have additional time at the meetings for informal discussions and networking. In 2005 the Chairs specifically requested that acoustics be included on the 2006 agenda. In response to these comments and because the case studies alone for the existing twelve councils take over a day and a half to present, we will replace the case studies with a half day panel discussion on acoustics.
3. **Increase council representation at the annual meeting.** As our FY06 budget allows, the NMSP will invite two members of each council to the 2006 Annual Meeting -- the council chair and one other member selected by the council. I believe increased representation and the ensuing larger body will allow for more continuity from year-to-year and will also provide an enhanced forum for critical upcoming conversations on a national advisory body and other issues. **Please work with your council immediately to determine who will travel to the meeting to represent your council, so those individuals can plan accordingly.**

Draft Meeting Agenda

The draft meeting agenda is enclosed. Please provide input on the proposed agenda by November 1, 2005.

There are several items of note within the agenda:

- ❖ **Council members do NOT meet at all on Monday, April 24. Council members meet Tuesday, April 25 – Thursday, April 27.**
- ❖ Several presentations will introduce you to and update you on the activities of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and NOAA's Marine Protected Area Center's Federal Advisory Committee. A group of students from the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment, will also present the findings of their masters' project. Their project compared our sanctuary advisory councils with Bureau of Land Managements' Resource Advisory Committees.
- ❖ NMSP headquarters staff will conduct a number of presentations to update you on national activities including NMSP Strategic Planning and Performance Measures, Reauthorization and the National Marine Sanctuaries Act and other high profile projects.

- ❖ The evening reception will offer opportunities for mingling with NMSP Headquarters staff, National Marine Sanctuary Foundation staff, meeting participants, as well as our partners in the Washington, D. C. area. We hope to hold the reception on Capitol Hill.
- ❖ The field trip is still in the planning stages. More information will be forthcoming.
- ❖ We will arrange a metro trip to the NMSP, headquarters offices to meet staff and tour the offices.
- ❖ Capitalizing on your local expertise and wisdom, I would like your thoughts and input on how to further engage the NMSP's national level constituents, including the possible establishment of a national advisory council. I would specifically appreciate thoughts on how best to mesh our current councils with any new body that might be created. To assist with that discussion, I am enclosing a discussion memo and matrix drafted by an internal working group composed of headquarters and field staff. **This will allow your council over a year to review and discuss the issue and provide your individual thoughts to me during a session at the 2006 Meeting.** Our time will be used most productively, by using the following questions to frame the discussion:
 - **If a national council were to be established, what factors should be considered?**
 - **How could your current councils best mesh with a potential national council?**
- ❖ At your request, we are pulling together a panel to present on and discuss acoustics. Though planning is still underway for the panel, the NMSP, NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Resources and a noted expert in acoustics will present. Presentations will be followed by an extended question and answer/discussion period. **Attached is a document, "Anthropogenic Noise in the Marine Environment: Potential Impacts on the Marine Resources of Stellwagen Bank and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuaries" to provide some background on the issue.**

The below questions are designed to encourage the councils to take a holistic look at the anthropogenic underwater noise disturbances occurring in their Sanctuaries and to reflect on how this noise is affecting living marine resources. By discussing this topic during one of your council meetings, the Chairs will be able to effectively participate in a discussion on acoustic impacts during the annual meeting. There will be an opportunity to ask questions to acoustics experts as well as discuss the differences and similarities between sites with respect to anthropogenic underwater noise.

- **What main sources of anthropogenic underwater noise are you aware of in your Sanctuary?**
 - **How do you think this anthropogenic noise is affecting the living marine resources of your Sanctuary?**
- ❖ The close out session is an opportunity to provide comments on meeting format, substance, logistics, organization and the like.
 - ❖ At your request, we will once again hold a very informal “Chairs Only” evening session over dinner. This is an opportunity to discuss any procedural, trouble-shooting or other concerns or issues with myself and the other Chairs. **Please bring discussion topics with you.**

Process for Thursday April 27

The national council and acoustics discussions on Thursday, April 27 will be two-way information exchanges. The NMSP seeks your individual, expert opinion based on your knowledge of your sanctuary, the NMSP and councils. You are welcome to read a statement from your council, but other than that the discussions are of an individual nature.

Because the Council of Chairs and Charter have been eliminated, there is no authority for voting, consensus, resolutions or motions.

Council Communications with Congress

Since the meeting will be held in Washington, D. C., it is also necessary to address the issue of communications with congress. Below is an excerpt from the NMSP Council Implementation Handbook.

“Council members are not prohibited from contacting Congress as private citizens on their concerns as private citizens. Council members may also respond if a Congressional member makes an inquiry to the Council. Subject to the Sanctuary Manager’s approval, a Council may make a recommendation to NOAA concerning NOAA legislation, which the agency can then take into account during its own decision-making process and may also inform Congress of the position taken by one or more Councils. Subject to the Sanctuary Manager’s approval, Councils may also comment on State legislation.

However, there is no authority for the Council to advise persons or groups other than the Secretary on legislation affecting Sanctuaries. Also, NOAA may not request or authorize Councils or their members to conduct any activity that would lead to

grassroots lobbying. Finally , the activities of the Council members can reflect adversely on NOAA by creating the appearance that the agency is engaged in such prohibited activities. Therefore, a Council may not write directly, or send copies of correspondence, to the U.S. Congress, either at the request of NOAA or on its own initiative. “

What council members can do while in Washington, D.C.:

- Attend reception hosted by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation on Capitol Hill.
- Set up your own meetings with Congress, as a private citizen.

What the NMSP cannot do while council members are in Washington, D. C.:

- Facilitate or attend meetings between council members and congress.

Future Information

Please expect the final agenda and meeting and travel logistics in early January.

Please share this information with your entire council and include pertinent items on your meeting agendas. The goal is to allow your Council opportunity to discuss, deliberate, and prepare for the annual meeting.

I look forward to seeing you in Washington, D. C.!

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Basta
Director
National Marine Sanctuary Program

Attachments:

Draft 2006 Annual Sanctuary Advisory Council National Meeting Agenda

National Advisory Council Options Working Group Matrix

National Advisory Council Options Working Group Discussion Memo

Anthropogenic Noise in the Marine Environment: Potential Impacts on the Marine Resources of Stellwagen Bank and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuaries

Cc: Sanctuary Managers
Sanctuary Advisory Council Coordinators